

NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE ATLANTIC TUNAS PROGRAM

FOR JUNE 1, 2006 - MAY 31, 2007

SUMMARY OF FISHERY INFORMATION AND REGULATIONS FOR ATLANTIC TUNA FISHERIES

MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Atlantic tunas are managed under the dual authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) and the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA). ATCA authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to implement the binding recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The authority to manage the U.S. Atlantic tuna fisheries is delegated to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service), Highly Migratory Species Management Division. In April 1999, NOAA Fisheries Service adopted the final Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks.

REGULATED SPECIES

Tunas subject to regulation are Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) (*Thunnus thynnus*), as well as "BAYS" tunas, i.e., bigeye tuna (BET) (*Thunnus obesus*), albacore tuna (ALB) (*Thunnus alalunga*), yellowfin tuna (YFT) (*Thunnus albacares*), and skipjack tuna (SKP) (*Katsuwonus pelamis*).

MANAGEMENT AREA

The regulatory area encompasses all waters of the Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.

OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC QUOTAS

BFT Quotas by category: For the 2006 fishing year, 2847.3 metric tons (mt) are available. The Reserve, to be used for inseason adjustments and fishery-independent research, is set at 282.3 mt.

	mt		mt		mt
General	1163.3	Purse Seine	624.1	Longline	268.2
Harpoon	124.0	Angling	380.1	Trap	5.3

PERMIT PROGRAM

All owners/operators of vessels (commercial, charter/headboat, or recreational) fishing for regulated Atlantic tunas in the management area, and all fish dealers purchasing regulated Atlantic tunas from those vessels must obtain an Atlantic tunas permit or an Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) vessel permit, or a tuna dealer permit, as applicable.

Atlantic tunas permits are issued in five commercial categories: General, Harpoon, Purse Seine, Longline, and Trap. Atlantic HMS permits are issued in two categories: Recreational Angling and Charter/Headboat. Only one category may be assigned to a vessel.

Atlantic tunas may be sold only by fishermen permitted in commercial categories and only to permitted dealers. Atlantic

tunas taken by persons aboard Angling category vessels may not be sold.

NOAA Fisheries Service maintains an automated permitting system for the issuance of Atlantic tunas and HMS vessel permits. To apply for or renew an Atlantic tunas or HMS vessel permit, visit www.hmspermits.gov or dial (888) 872-8862. Customer Service for the Automated Permitting System can be reached by pressing "0" from the main menu. To apply for an Atlantic tunas dealer permit, call the NOAA Fisheries Service, Northeast Region Permit Office at (978) 281-9370.

LARGE PELAGIC SURVEY

NOAA Fisheries Service collects data on fishing effort and catch for BFT and other pelagic fishes through the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS). Through weekly telephone interviews, NOAA Fisheries Service obtains information about fishing activity directed at large pelagic fishes. Captains are selected randomly from the permit list and may be contacted more than once during the fishing season. The telephone survey includes only questions about the number of fishing trips for the previous week. In addition, field surveys collect biological samples and catch data for estimating annual catches of tunas and other large pelagic fishes.

Collection of information about recreational catch of Atlantic tunas is essential for stock assessments and reports to ICCAT. Cooperation with LPS dockside and telephone interviewers is required under the authority of ATCA. Note that the LPS will be used as independent validation of the Automated Landings Reporting System (ALRS) for BFT, thus a small degree of duplication is unavoidable. See the last page of this brochure for information regarding the ALRS.

For inseason fishery notices (retention limit adjustments, closures, etc.), visit www.hmspermits.gov, or call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at (888) 872-8862 or (978) 281-9260.

This brochure is produced in compliance with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY INFORMATION

All fishing for any species must cease and the vessel must immediately return to port to off-load when the large medium or giant BFT bag limit is retained or possessed under regulations pertaining to the General, HMS Charter/Headboat, and HMS Angling category fisheries, as applicable. In the case of multi-day trips, the daily limit applies upon landing. Directed fishing for BFT in the Gulf of Mexico is prohibited. Landing BFT > 73" is allowed in the Gulf of Mexico only under the HMS Angling category trophy and Longline category retention limits. Authorized gear for Atlantic tunas: Rod and Reel (including downriggers), handline, harpoon, bandit gear, longlines, traps (pound nets and fish weirs), and purse seines. Gear type restrictions for BFT are specified below.

GENERAL CATEGORY

2006 BFT Quota:	1163.3 mt (including 10 mt reserved for the New York bight)		
Status:	Commercial		
Gear Type:	Rod and Reel (including downriggers), handline, harpoon, bandit gear		
Description:	Vessel owners who harvest Atlantic tunas, including large medium and giant BFT, by handgear and plan to sell the tuna must obtain a permit in the General category. Vessels permitted in the General category are eligible to sell giant or large medium BFT. These BFT will be counted against the General category quota.		
Restricted Fishing Days: (RFDs)	General category vessels are prohibited from fishing (including tag and release fishing) for BFT: all Saturdays and Sundays from November 18, 2006 through January 31, 2007, and November 23, 2006, and December 25, 2006.		
Tournaments:	General category vessels may participate in registered recreational HMS fishing tournaments. Recreational size/retention limits apply for sharks swordfish and billfish. General category size/retention limits apply to regulated Atlantic tunas.		
Season:	Opens: June 1, 2006 Closes: January 31, 2007, for BFT or when time-period subquota met; May 31, 2007, for BAYS.		
Retention Limits:	No more than the daily retention limits may be on board a vessel		
BFT:	<u>Size class:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young School School Large School Sm . Medium Large Medium /Giants 	<u>Limit:</u> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">}</div> <div>Prohibited</div> </div> <hr/> Check website or information lines for current limits.	
Time-period Sub quotas (mt):	<u>Months</u> June–August September Oct – Jan NY Bight TOTAL	<u>Percentage</u> 60 30 10 NA 100	<u>Quota</u> 692.0 346.0 115.3 10.0 1163.3
YFT & BET	Greater than or equal to 27" CFL	No Limit	
ALB & SKP	No minimum size	No Limit	

If a time period subquota is filled before the end of the period for which it is allocated, NOAA Fisheries Service will close the General category until the start of the next period. See size class categories for BFT under "Landings Information".

HARPOON

2006 BFT Quota:	124.0 mt	
Status:	Commercial	
Gear Type:	Harpoon	
Description:	Vessel owner/operators who exclusively use harpoons for Atlantic tunas, including large medium and giant BFT, must obtain a permit in the Harpoon category. Vessels permitted in the Harpoon category may not participate in the General category fishery.	
Season:	Opens: June 1, 2006 Closes: November 15, 2006	
BFT Retention Limits:	<u>Size class:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young School School Large School Small Medium Large Medium Giants 	<u>Limit:</u> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">}</div> <div>Prohibited</div> </div> <hr/> 2/vessel/day No Limit
YFT & BET	Greater than or equal to 27" CFL	No Limit
ALB & SKP	No minimum size	No Limit

HMS ANGLING CATEGORY

2006 BFT Quota:	380.1 mt		
Status:	Recreational (no sale)		
Gear Type:	Rod and Reel (including downriggers) and handlines		
Description:	Private recreational vessel owners who harvest Atlantic tunas must obtain a permit in the HMS Angling category. Young school BFT (< 27") may not be retained and must be released immediately. Permit holders in this category may retain only one large medium or giant "trophy" BFT per fishing year. <i>All BFT must be reported within 24 hours of landing (see information in shaded box on last page).</i>		
Season:	Opens: June 1, 2006 Closes: May 31, 2007, or when quota is met		
Retention Limits:	No more than the daily retention limits may be on board a vessel		
BFT:	<u>Size class</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young School• School• Large School• Small Medium• Large Medium /Giant	<u>Limit</u> Prohibited ----- Check website or information lines for current limits. ----- 1/vessel/year	
<u>BFT Quotas (mt):</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Large School/ Small Medium</u>	<u>Large Medium/Giant</u>
North	23.2	150.3	4.2
South	26.0	168.1	8.3
Reserve	0.0	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	49.2	318.4	12.5
YFT	Greater than or equal to 27" CFL	3/person/day (includes Capt. & Mates)	
BET	Greater than or equal to 27" CFL	No Limit	
ALB & SKP	No minimum size	No Limit	
BFT North/South Line: North = north of 39°18'N (Great Egg Inlet, NJ and north) South = south of 39°18'N (Great Egg Inlet, NJ and south)			

HMS CHARTER/HEADBOAT CATEGORY

2006 BFT Quota:	Vessels are eligible to participate in the General and HMS Angling category quotas	
Status:	Commercial and Recreational	
Gear Type:	Rod and Reel (including downriggers) and handlines	
Description:	Any vessel that carries passengers for hire must obtain a permit in the HMS Charter/Headboat category. Anglers aboard vessels permitted in this category may collectively fish under either the daily HMS Angling or General category limit as applicable on that day. The size category of the first BFT retained or possessed will determine the fishing category of all persons aboard the vessel for that day, and the applicable catch limits. On General category RFDs, anglers aboard HMS Charter/Headboat vessels may only fish under the HMS Angling category BFT retention limits. <i>All recreationally caught BFT must be reported within 24 hours of landing (see info in shaded box on last page).</i>	
Season:	Opens: June 1, 2006 Closes: May 31, 2007, or when quota is met (no sale of BFT February 1 through May 31, or if landed under the 'trophy' allowance)	
Retention Limits:	No more than the daily retention limits may be on board a vessel	
BFT:	<u>Size class</u> • Young School	<u>Limit</u> Prohibited
	• School	Check website or information lines for current limits.
	• Large School/Small Medium	
	• Large Medium/Giant	1/vessel/year (Rec.) See General category Limits (Comm.)
YFT*	Greater than or equal to 27" CFL	Recreational: 3/person/day (includes Capt. & Mates) Commercial: No Limit
BET	Greater than or equal to 27" CFL	No Limit
ALB & SKP	No minimum size	No Limit
*The recreational YFT retention limit applies to CHB vessels only when the vessels engaged in a for-hire trip (i.e., paying passenger on board or 4 or more people on board)		

TRAP CATEGORY

2006 BFT Quota:	5.3 mt	
Status:	Commercial	
Gear Type:	Pound net, fish weir	
Description:	Owners of vessels conducting trap operations that may result in the incidental taking of large medium and giant BFT must obtain a Trap category permit.	
Season:	Opens: June 1, 2006 Closes: May 31, 2007, or when quota met	
BFT Retention Limits:	<u>Size class:</u> • Young School	<u>Limit:</u> Prohibited
	• School	1/vessel/year
	• Large School	
	• Small Medium	
	• Large Medium/Giants	
No Atlantic tunas other than BFT taken incidentally may be retained		

LONGLINE CATEGORY

2006 BFT Quota:	268.2 mt	
Status:	Commercial (Limited Access)	
Gear Type:	Longline (Pelagic/Bottom)	
Description:	Owners of vessels conducting longline operations for Atlantic tunas, including the incidental take of large medium and giant BFT, must obtain a Longline category permit.	
Season:	Opens: June 1, 2006 Closes: May 31, 2007, or when quota is met	
Time Area Closures:	Please contact NOAA Fisheries Service at (301) 713-2347	
Retention Limits:		
BFT:	<u>Size class:</u> • Young School • School • Large School • Small Medium • Large Medium/Giant	<u>Limit:</u> Prohibited
		See below
- 1/vessel/trip with at least 2,000 lb of species other than BFT* - 2/vessel/trip with at least 6,000 lb of species other than BFT* - 3/vessels/trip with at least 30,000 lb of species other than BFT* *legally caught, retained, and offloaded from the same trip and are recorded on the dealer weighout slip as sold.		
BFT Quotas (mt):		Northern area is north of 31° 00' N. Latitude, near Jekyll Island, Georgia, while the Southern area is south of this line. For NED see 50 CFR 635.23(f)(3).
North	70.5	
NED	79.9	
South	117.8	
TOTAL	268.2	
YFT & BET	Greater than or equal to 27" CFL	No Limit
ALB & SKP	No minimum size	No Limit

PURSE SEINE CATEGORY

2006 BFT Quota:	624.1 mt	
Status:	Commercial	
Gear Type:	Purse seine nets	
Description:	Owners of vessels conducting purse seine operations for Atlantic tunas, must obtain a Purse seine category permit	
Season:	Opens: July 15, 2006, for BFT; June 1, 2006, for other tunas Closes: December 31, 2006, for BFT; May 31, 2007, for other tunas	
BFT Retention Limits:	<u>Size class:</u> • Young School • School • Large School • Small Medium • Large Medium/Giants	<u>Limit:</u> *1% Incidental Take (for all)
		Allocated per vessel for the season (+/- carryover from previous season)
Large medium catch may not exceed 15% by weight of total amount of Giant BFT landed per fishing year		
*No sale – counted against vessel allocation		

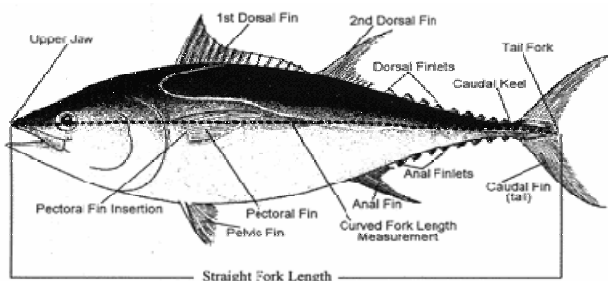
LANDINGS INFORMATION

CURVED FORK LENGTH (CFL) MEASUREMENT

For enforcement purposes, total curved fork length is the sole criterion for determining the size class of whole (with head) Atlantic tunas. Measurements must be taken in a line, tracing the contour of the body from the tip of the upper jaw to the fork of the tail, which abuts the dorsal insertion of the pectoral fin and the dorsal side of the caudal keel. For tunas with heads removed, pectoral fin curved fork length (PFCFL) must be taken and multiplied by a conversion factor of 1.35 to obtain total curved fork length. Measurements must be taken from the dorsal insertion of the pectoral fin, tracing the contour of the body, to the fork of the tail. **THE TAPE MUST TOUCH THE TOP PORTION OF THE PECTORAL FIN.**

LANDING FORM

Bluefin, bigeye, and yellowfin tuna may be landed round with fins intact, or eviscerated with the head removed, but with one pectoral fin and the tail remaining attached.



No person may retain or possess a BFT with the head removed that is less than 20 inches, PFCFL. No person may remove the head of a bigeye tuna or yellowfin tuna if the remaining portion would be less than 27 inches from the fork of the tail to the forward edge of the cut.

The minimum size for yellowfin and bigeye tuna is 27 inches curved fork length.

Landings of large medium and giant BFT must be reported. If sold, the landings must be reported by a licensed dealer on landing cards faxed to the NOAA Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Office. BFT not sold by commercial permit holders must be reported to the nearest NOAA Fisheries Service Enforcement office upon landing. Recreational landings of large medium and giant ("trophy") BFT must be reported as indicated in the HMS Angling category reporting section below.

SIZE CLASS CATEGORIES OF BFT

Size Class	Curved Fork Length	Pectoral Fin Curved Fork Length	Approx. Round Weight
Young School	< 27 "	< 20 "	< 14 lbs
School	27 - < 47"	20 - < 35"	14 - < 66 lbs
Large School	47 - < 59"	35 - < 44"	66 - < 135 lbs
Small Medium	59 - < 73"	44 - < 54"	135 - < 235 lbs
Large Medium	73 - < 81"	54 - < 60"	235 - < 310 lbs
Giant	81" or >	60" or >	310 lbs or >

Since fishery rules are subject to change, fishermen must familiarize themselves with the latest regulations (via www.hmspermits.gov or the Atlantic Tunas Information Line). Fishermen are responsible for complying with current official regulations.

ADDRESS & TELEPHONE INFORMATION

NOAA Fisheries Service maintains a 24-hour Information Line for news concerning Atlantic tunas. The Information Line, which is updated daily Monday through Friday, announces closure notices, inseason quota adjustments, and updates of commercial landings for BFT. This information is also available on the website.

24 Hour Atlantic Tunas Information Line: (888) 872-8862 or (978) 281-9260 or www.hmspermits.gov

Notices of closures, quota transfers, and retention limit adjustments are published in the Federal Register and announced to permit holders by other means, including NOAA Weather Radio.

For further information concerning the Atlantic tuna fisheries, contact:

NOAA Fisheries Service
Highly Migratory Species Management Division
One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930
phone: (978) 281-9260 fax: (978) 281-9340

Other important phone numbers:

Cooperative Tagging Program (800) 437-3936
(To obtain a tagging kit or report a tag recovery)

NOAA Fisheries Service Enforcement Offices

Ellsworth, ME	(207) 664-0508	Brunswick, GA	(912) 261-8242
Portland, ME	(207) 780-3241	Titusville, FL	(321) 269-0004
Gloucester, MA	(978) 281-9213	Miami, FL	(786) 845-9580
Braintree, MA	(781) 843-9267	Marathon, FL	(305) 743-3110
New Bedford, MA	(508) 992-7711	Fort Meyers, FL	(941) 334-2575
Bellport, NY	(631) 776-1734	Sarasota, FL	(941) 359-3920
Wall, NJ	(732) 280-6490	St. Petersburg, FL	(727) 893-3650
Marmora, NJ	(609) 390-8303	Niceville, FL	(850) 729-8628
Ocean city, MD	(410) 629-1258	Guaynabo, PR	(787) 749-4405
Glyncro, GA	(912) 280-5158	Carriere, MS	(601) 798-9535
Newport News, VA	(757) 595-2692	Baton Rouge, LA	(225) 769-3134
Atlantic Beach, NC	(252) 808-2393	Galveston, TX	(409) 770-0812
Charleston, SC	(843) 308-9861	Harlingen, TX	(956) 423-3450

Enforcement Hotlines

The NOAA Fisheries Service Office of Enforcement maintains a 24-hour hotline for the public to report potential violations of Atlantic tunas regulations. This number should be used only to report potential violations, not for general information, concerning Atlantic tunas. NOAA Fisheries Service Enforcement Hotline (800) 853-1964. Coast Guard Hotline (800) SAVE-FISH

Coast Guard Regulations

Commercial vessels are subject to the Fishing Vessel Safety Act of 1988.

For information, contact your local Coast Guard office:

Maine to New York	(617) 223-8315
New Jersey to North Carolina	(757) 398-6554
South Carolina to Florida	(305) 415-6868
Gulf of Mexico	(504) 589-4554

Angling and HMS Charter/Headboat category vessel operators are required to report all recreationally caught BFT.

Area Landed	How to Report:
NC/MD	Go to a Reporting Station (See Below)
All other states	Call 1-888-872-8862 or www.hmspermits.gov

For NC reporting station locations, call 1-800-338-7804. For MD reporting station locations, call 410-213-1531. If reporting via the Automated Landings Reporting System (1-888-872-8862), select the landings reporting option. If you've reported your landings at a NC or MD landings station, please do not call the Automated Landings Reporting System, as you are exempt from that requirement.